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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming apparatus comprising:

a detecting section which detects that a lifetime of an expendable used to form images is expiring;

5 a counting section which counts a used amount of the expendable when the detecting section detects that the lifetime of the expendable is expiring; and

a control section which disregards the fact that the lifetime of the expendable is expiring, even when  
10 the fact is detected again before the used amount of the expendable, which is counted by the counting section, reaches a prescribed value.

2. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 an interface communicably to be connected to a computer installed at a seller of the expendable; and

a mode storage section storing a mode in which an order for the expendable is automatically placed with the computer installed at the seller of the  
20 expendable, when the detecting section detects that the lifetime of the expendable is expiring.

3. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a display section which displays a message when  
25 the detecting section detects again that the lifetime is expiring.

4. An image forming apparatus according to

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claim 1, wherein the expendable is a drum incorporated in a process unit.

5           5. An image forming apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the used amount is a number of sheets printed by using the drum.

6. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the expendable is toner contained in a toner cartridge.

10           7. An image forming apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the used amount is an amount of the toner used.

8. A method of operating an image forming apparatus, comprising:

15           detecting that a lifetime of an expendable used to form images is expiring;

          counting a used amount of the expendable, when the detecting section detects that the lifetime of the expendable is expiring; and

20           disregarding the fact that the lifetime of the expendable is expiring, even when the fact is detected again before the used amount of the expendable, which is counted, reaches a prescribed value.

9. A method of operating an image forming apparatus, according to claim 8, further comprising:

25           automatically placing an order for the expendable with the computer installed at the seller of the expendable, when the counting section detects that the

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lifetime of the expendable is expiring.

10. A method of operating an image forming apparatus, according to claim 8, further comprising:

5 displaying a message when the detecting section detects again that the lifetime is expiring.

11. A method of operating an image forming apparatus, according to claim 8, wherein the expendable is a drum incorporated in a process unit.

10 12. A method of operating an image forming apparatus, according to claim 11, wherein the used amount is a number of sheets printed by using the drum.

13. A method of operating an image forming apparatus, according to claim 8, wherein the expendable a toner cartridge containing toner.

15 14. A method of operating an image forming apparatus, according to claim 13, wherein the used amount is an amount of the toner used.